

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/042,549

Amendment filed with RCE dated November 17, 2004

Submission constitutes a complete response to the Office Action of November 17, 2003

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph on page 16, beginning on line 12 and ending on line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

As stated earlier, alternatively, niobium billets can be made following the above-described extruding details: Accordingly, a niobium billet having a substantially uniform grain size is obtained. The preferred parameters for the grain size and other characteristics are the same as for the tantalum parameters provided above, taking into account the different melting temperature and other working conditions of niobium (e.g., extruding at lower temperatures, such as from about 1000 °F °C to about 1650 °F °C) that are known to those skilled in the art.